“Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators: Presentation of the Romanian initiative supported by EEA and Norway Grants Mechanism, 2009 – 2014”

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Bucharest
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Short legislative history of the health mediation activities within the decentralization context

2002
- Ministerial Order 619/2002 to approve the health mediator occupation and the Technical Norms concerning the organization, functioning and financing of health mediators activity in 2002

2004
- Ministerial Order 443/2004 concerning the content and functioning of the Ministerial Commission for Roma within the MoH

2006
- Law 95/2006 concerning the health reform, including title V “Community Care”

2007
- Common ORDER MoH/NHIF 570/116/2007, approving the national community care program, 200 new health mediators, mean cost for Roma health mediator (salaries and other functioning expenditures)

2008
- Common ORDER 574/269/2008 – concerning the activity of health mediator within the national health programs – 1800 community nurses, Roma health mediators and HIV/AIDS counselors were employed
- Emergency Ordinance 162/2008 concerning the transfer of attributions and competences from the MoH toward the local public administration authorities

2009-prezent
- Governmental Decision 56/2009 to approve the methodological Norms for the above Emergency Ordinance
2010

Economic Crisis

Context:

Consequences:

Deeper health inequalities for Roma population
A number of important projects/programs/strategies were developed or implemented during the last 5 years:

- Impact evaluation of the Health Mediation Program (2011) since its start in 2002

- Health mediation program: Opportunity to increase the employment rate among Roma women (2011-2013) financed by the Operational Sector Program – Development of Human Resources (EU)

- RO 19.03: Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to Improve the Health Status of Roma Population financed by Norway Grants – ongoing

RO 19.03: Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to Improve the Health Status of Roma Population

Project Promoter: National Institute of Public Health

Project Partner: Roma Centre for Health Policies - SASTIPEN
• **Project Objective:** to increase access of Roma vulnerable groups to basic **community health** services.

• **Specific Objective:** Enhance institutional capacity of the local authority through further development of the network of **Roma health mediators and community nurses**, focusing on mother and child health, reproductive health and MDR TB control.

• **Project duration:** 23 months (4 months extension)  
  – Started in June 2014

• **Project Budget:** 1.6 mil euro
WHY this new project?

To reduce health inequalities

To develop resources at all levels of care in the health system
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Objective</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What is the added-value of this project?

1. Community TEAM BUILDING (by now Roma health mediators never worked in a team)

2. Project provides research evidences on lifestyle risk factors of Roma population together with evidences on socio-economic determinants of health

3. This project will work in sinergy with another 2 components of the Norway funded projects running at the same period of time (RO.02 - MDR TB control and RO.04 – Multilevel interventions to prevent the NCDs).

reduced health inequalities of Roma population
About 613,000 (3.3% of total population) people declared their Roma ethnicity during the census from 2011.

However, the Council of Europe estimated the Roma population living in Romania in 2010 at number in the range between 1.2 mil and 2.5 mil (or between 6.5% and 13.5% of total population).

Roma population is a YOUNG one. Children and adolescents (0-14 years of age) – future new generation of active population – represents about 40% of total Roma population (as compared with 15% for the general population).

It is estimated that a number between 6% and 20% of the starting active population in Romania are currently roma.
A study from 2011 shows that roma living in Romania have the lowest daily income in SEE region (6 $ ppp/day as compared with 13 $ ppp/day for non-roma)

(An Option of Last Resort? Migration of Roma and Non-Roma from CEE countries - UNDP Bratislava 2013)

The research study carried out under RO 19.03 project shows that the monthly income per family is of rather low: about 82% of the roma families from the 45 selected Communities have a lower income than the minimum income per economy in Romania (850 RON ~ 200 eur per month), even worse, 67% are living with less than 500 RON per month (a bit more than 100 eur).
The low level of income is correlated with their educational level and with the level of unemployment.

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of roma population”)
Research Study Results (3)

Social Determinants of Health and SES (socio-economic status) influence

*Distribution of the roma population sample (654) by level of education and gender*

(research study *carried out under* Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of roma population”)
Research Study Results (4)

Social Determinants of Health and SES (socio-economic status) influence

*Distribution of the roma population sample by employment status and gender*

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of roma population”)
Research Study Results (5)

Social Determinants of Health and living conditions influence

More than half of the roma people are living in over-crowded households: 51% are living with more than 5 persons, while 19% are living together with more than 7 persons.

Living conditions of roma population by employment status

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of roma population”)
Research Study Results (6)

Lifestyle Factors: Smoking

Smoking prevalence among roma people from the selected 45 communities was of **47%**, almost twice higher than in the general population (26.7% - GATS Survey 2011).

*Smoking prevalence by gender among roma population sample*

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of roma population”)*
Research Study Results (7)

Lifestyle Factors: Alcohol consumption

Results related to self-reported alcohol consumption are inconclusive and should be carefully interpreted. 70% of the respondents declared that they did not use alcohol over the last 12 months, but declare further what types of alcoholic drinks they have used. Only 17% declared a regular alcohol use.

*Alcohol use among roma population sample*

- nu raspunde: 0.6%
- zilnic sau aproape zilnic: 1.8%
- 2-3 zile/luna: 6.0%
- 1-4 ori/saptamana: 9.3%
- rar: 12.7%
- niciodata: 69.6%

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of Roma population”)
Research Study Results (8)

Health Status of Roma population (adults) sample

59% of the respondents have a good or very good self-perceived health status (compared with 70% in the general population)

*Main chronic diseases (diagnosed by a MD)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronic diseases</th>
<th>No. diagnosed cases</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COPD</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myocardial Infarction</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypertension</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artroza</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musculoskeletal diseases</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cirrhzis of liver</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renal diseases</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digestive diseases</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of roma population”)

88% of parents declare a good health status of their children. Only 5% declare important health problems of their children.

**Main chronic diseases in children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chronic Disease</th>
<th>Self-declared</th>
<th>Diagnosed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>1 (0.21%)</td>
<td>1 (0.21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Bronchitis</td>
<td>5 (1.05%)</td>
<td>4 (0.84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital cardio-vascular abnormalities</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>3 (0.63%)</td>
<td>3 (0.63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital skeletal abnormalities</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alergies</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye diseases</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
<td>2 (0.42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altele</td>
<td>4 (0.84%)</td>
<td>7 (1.46%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(research study **carried out under** Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the **Health status of roma population**”)
Research Study Results (10)

Health Status of Roma population (children 0-14) sample

- 89% of mothers were breastfeeding their children, out of which more than 80% have breastfed at least 6 months, 25% until the age of 1 and 46% even more than 1 year.
- 79% of the interviewed mothers consider the vaccination as a protective factor for their children.
- 88% of mothers declared that their children under age of 2 were vaccinated.

Perception of vaccination

- Este buna pentru ca ne protejeaza copiii de boli: 78.7%
- Este buna pentru ca este gratuita: 12.3%
- Nu am nici o parere/Nu ma intereszeaza: 4.8%
- Nu este un lucru bun, poate dauna copiilor: 4.2%

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of roma population”)
Roma Women Health

• more than half of Roma women (56%) have never had a gynecological check-up if they were not pregnant

• 48% of Roma women have never heard of Paps smear. Even if they knew, 71% of them did never have this test

• 88% of Roma women have never had a breast examination (mamography)

• Fertility rate among Roma women is of about 3 children per woman (3 times higher than in general population)

• 40% of the Roma women are using a contraceptive method

(research study carried out under Project RO 19.03 “Strengthening the National Network of Roma Health Mediators to improve the Health status of Roma population”)
A summary of the research study can be found at:

Other important results of the project

45 collaboration partnerships were signed by the Mayors of the 45 selected communities, the National Institute of Public Health and Roma Center for Health Policies - SASTIPEN
Other important results of the project

45 Roma Health Mediators and 45 Community nurses were employed by the project for 1 year. Roma health mediators are in full professional training process, with theoretical sessions and practical activity at community level. Community nurses attended the CME session and continue their work at community level.

They are working in a TEAM!
Other important results of the project

Community nurses are developing the community profile. Roma health mediators are collecting information and registering their Roma population living in the community.

A community profile include information on:
• geography
• population
• history
• occupations
• existing education institutions
• leisure time habits
• main celebrations and events
• important persons from the community
Other important results of the project
Community Health Centres are in full process of refurbishing and cleaning.
More information about the project can be found at:

http://www.insp.gov.ro/sites/03/
Thank you!

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